

City of Santa Rosa

Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018

Policy & Program Recommendations

August 2018

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1. Recommended Programs

This section describes recommended bicycle and pedestrian related programs for the City of Santa Rosa. The recommendations are organized in four E's:

- **Education** programs are designed to improve safety and awareness. They can include programs that teach students how to safely cross the street, or teach drivers where to anticipate bicyclists and how to share the road safely.
- **Encouragement** programs provide incentives and support to help people leave their car at home and try walking or bicycling instead.
- **Enforcement** programs enforce legal and respectful walking, bicycling, and driving. They include a variety of approaches, ranging from police enforcement to neighborhood signage campaigns.
- **Evaluation** programs are an important component of any investment. They help measure success at meeting the goals of this plan and to identify adjustments that may be necessary.

Programs recommended on the following pages should include outreach and education in both English and Spanish to serve the diverse Santa Rosa community.

Education

Updated “StreetSmarts” Campaign

Santa Rosa has joined other California cities in implementing “StreetSmarts” media campaigns. StreetSmarts uses print media, radio, and television to educate the community about safe driving, bicycling, skateboarding, and walking behavior. As part of this campaign, the City distributed posters with messages that addressed issues such as: red light running, speeding, bicycle safety, crosswalk safety and compliance, school zone speed compliance, and stop sign compliance.

This Plan Update gives Santa Rosa an opportunity to update these messages to address the most current priorities they have heard from the community, including not texting while driving or walking, how to securely lock your bicycle, the importance of being seen at night as a pedestrian or bicyclist, and helping drivers understand where to anticipate bicyclists. One message identified by the community as a priority is increasing awareness of California's Three Foot Passing law, which requires drivers to overtake bicyclists only when there is sufficient room for a three-foot clearance. The County is currently running a related campaign that the City could support with their own artwork and messaging.

Artwork for the updated campaign could be created by local students as part of a Traffic Safety Poster Contest, or photos of local families on streets that will be familiar to the community could be used. Posters could also highlight and share information about newly completed projects, such as green transition areas. Funding could be provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety.

To maximize engagement and effectiveness of the campaign, the city can develop messaging and choose graphics with involvement from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, law enforcement, schools, business owners, civic leaders, and community advocates.

Bicycle Safety Education for Adults

The Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (SCBC) currently offers Smart Cycling classes once a month at their office in downtown Santa Rosa, in addition to periodically offering on-bicycle educational rides for adults. These courses are based on a curriculum from the League of American Bicyclists that focuses on how bicyclists should behave so they are safer, more predictable, and can be confident riding on streets both with and without dedicated bicycle facilities. The SCBC classes also incorporate photos and video clips of local streets to help students understand how various scenarios apply to real Santa Rosa locations.

This Plan Update recommends continuing these classes, which the City can support by advertising the classes and/or providing meeting space.

Safe Routes to School

Santa Rosa benefits from a robust Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program coordinated by Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) and the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition. Twenty-six schools in the City participate in activities with the SRTS program, but involvement varies from school to school.

This Plan recommends the City seek grant funding to prepare a SRTS Plan to document and evaluate effectiveness of existing program activities, and identify priority programs to expand to all schools. This should include Suggested Routes to School maps at all schools, which help families plan their walking or bicycling trip to school by highlighting enhanced crossings and bikeways.

Encouragement

Hire a Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator

This Plan recommends hiring one or more staff members who can work on bicycle and pedestrian projects and program coordination full time. This person ensures that all planning, public works, and transportation projects account for bicyclists and pedestrians. They can also write grant applications to fund projects and programs and serve as city liaison for all bicycle and pedestrian coordination with the public and neighboring jurisdictions.

If funding is not available to create a new position, the City can hire interns to work on bicycle and pedestrian projects until a suitable full-time staff member can be found. Some organizations and foundations will fund staff member salaries, fellowships, or contractor salaries for a set period of time. The City should apply for grants from one or more of these foundations.

Social Walks/Rides

Supporting social walks and bicycle rides in Santa Rosa can provide many benefits to the community. People who are uncomfortable bicycling or walking alone, or who are unfamiliar with the best routes to use, will benefit from having a group to show them the way. Rides can also be used as informal education opportunities to remind participants about safe walking and bicycling behavior and sharing the road.

This Plan recommends the City partner with or support local organizations who wish to host rides or walks, including the Council on Aging, the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, and others.

Walking & Biking Ambassadors

During the public outreach activities conducted for this Plan, the community repeatedly expressed concerns about personal security and comfort when bicycling or walking in Santa Rosa, especially on the extensive creek trail network. These trails provide a high quality experience for walking and bicycling separated from high-traffic streets, but can be secluded with little natural surveillance.

An ambassador program could recruit volunteers to act as eyes on the trail, report maintenance needs, share educational materials and maps, and provide a friendly presence on the trail network. Staffing needs for this program would be minimal, limited to coordinating occasional volunteer training sessions. Trusted volunteers may also be enlisted to help with program coordination.

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy in San Jose operates a volunteer trail ambassador program, where volunteers wear green vests to identify themselves and spend at least 45 minutes each week bicycling or walking on the trail. In addition to reporting maintenance needs, ambassadors carry small kits with supplies for basic first aid, bicycle repairs, graffiti removal, or other tasks based on their interest and preference.

This Plan recommends Santa Rosa consider a pilot Walking & Biking Ambassador program in partnership with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board, the Southeast Greenway Team, the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, and others.

Develop a Bike Rack Program

Bike Rack programs coordinate and streamline bike rack installations. The program could be managed by an intern who could work with staff and business owners to install bike racks and bike corrals citywide. This also ensures bike racks are properly installed as to not block sidewalks while still being usable for bicyclists.

Currently, there are no bike corrals installed in Santa Rosa. The City can install bike corrals in high-traffic locations such as in

vehicle parking spots on the corners of 4th and 5th Streets in downtown. This not only sends a statement that secure bike parking is important to the city and community members, but bike corrals increase visibility at intersections for all roadway users. An increase in visibility should reduce the risk of a collision in these locations.

The city could also develop customized bike racks. These racks can serve as a “brand,” highlighting the Santa Rosa identity as a bicycle-friendly community and can double as art features.

Where appropriate, this program could also coordinate with local businesses to provide bicycle lockers or other secure parking for employees and long-term visitors. Secure long-term parking is a key component of the bicycle network to encourage employees to bicycle instead of driving, and helps reduce bicycle theft.

Promote a Bicycle Friendly Business Program

Bicycle Friendly Business programs recognize businesses who make it easy and convenient for both employees and customers to arrive by bicycle. This requires different strategies to accommodate the different needs of customers and employees. For customers, providing bicycle parking and supporting City bicycling projects can make it safer and easier to travel by bicycle. Some businesses also choose to offer discounts or incentives to people who bicycle.

For employees, offering secure long-term parking for bicycles is key. This could include a secure gated bicycle parking area, or access to bicycle lockers. If space is not available for dedicated secure bicycle parking, business owners and landlords can consider allowing employees and tenants to bring bicycles inside and store them in their workspace or another designated location. Providing changing areas, showers, or lockers to store belongings can also make it easier for employees to bicycle to work.

By recognizing businesses who support bicycling, Santa Rosa can support their local economy while fostering partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and business owners to build

community support for bicycling projects and programs. The League of American Bicyclists has a Bicycle Friendly Business program similar to the BFC program, and some communities have chosen to develop their own programs. Sutter Hospital was recently awarded the City's first Bicycle Friendly Business award from the League.

SMART Corridor Bike Share

In November 2017, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) approved over \$800,000 for a bike share pilot program in Sonoma and Marin counties along the SMART train corridor. The program is considering employing GPS-enabled dockless bikes that do not require bikes to be placed at more traditional docking stations. These counties predict that the presence of shared bikes around SMART stations could free up space currently being used by people bringing bikes onto SMART trains. Instead, people can use shared bike near stations for their first mile and last mile commutes.

SMART has carried approximately 537,000 passengers and 46,000 bicycles since beginning passenger service in August 2017. This means nearly one in twelve riders are bringing a bicycle on board with them, and trains are quickly reaching capacity for bicycles. Supporting a regional bicycle sharing program could reduce the number of bicycles brought on board if riders have access to a shared bicycle at each end of their transit trip.

The City of Santa Rosa can support Sonoma County in these efforts, and help the county determine guidelines for the traditional or dockless bikes that best serve the needs of Santa Rosa residents. In addition, Santa Rosa can help advertise and gain interest for the bike sharing system through its communications channels.

Enforcement

Targeted Enforcement

The Santa Rosa Police Department currently conducts targeted enforcement periodically based on requests from the community or focus areas of grant funding received.

This Plan recommends continuing these efforts, with a focus on those behaviors that create the greatest risk or potential conflict, and care should be taken that programs do not unfairly target specific demographics or modes of transportation. This Plan also recommends continuing current educational enforcement activities, where officers stop individuals and discuss the unsafe behavior observed without issuing citations.

Behaviors and locations for targeted enforcement should be reviewed each year based on collision data and community input. Current behaviors cited as challenges during public outreach for this Plan include drivers failing to stop at red lights and yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, pedestrians crossing streets at undesirable locations, and bicyclists riding on the wrong side of the road.

Bait Bike Program

Bike theft is a concern in the Santa Rosa community, with many residents identifying it as a barrier that currently discourages them from bicycling more often.

Bait bike programs involve a bicycle outfitted with a discrete tracking device monitored by the local police department. The bicycle should be nondescript and consistent with the character of bicycles ridden in the community. Periodically, the police department will lock the bait bike at a location where thefts have been reported, and monitor the tracking device. When the bicycle is stolen, police can then use the location data to recover the bicycle and cite the thief. These programs can be particularly effective in prosecuting 'organized' bicycle theft operations that remove bicycles from the community to be sold in bulk at another location.

Citations should be monitored and routinely reviewed to ensure the bait bike program is not disproportionately targeting disadvantaged or minority communities in Santa Rosa. Similarly, bait bike deployment locations should be selected to provide geographic equity covering all parts of the City evenly.

An outreach campaign should be paired with the launch of the bait bike program to publicize the effort and discourage theft by emphasizing that local police are taking bicycle theft seriously. It can also be a deterrent to thieves if they know the bicycle they are stealing may be a bait bike.

Evaluation

Annual Report Card

An annual report card serves as an evaluation assessing the City's progress toward goals and objectives outlined in this Plan, implementation of the recommended projects and programs, and changing mode splits for active transportation. In addition to tracking these data, annual report cards can incorporate a review of effectiveness to evaluate costs and benefits of various efforts and adjust investments to maximize results.

This Plan recommends the City develop an Annual Report Card that tracks progress toward implementing this Plan, in addition to incorporating annual collision data, SRTS program and participation data, and other relevant information to highlight successes and challenges of improving walking and bicycling in the community each year. Specific performance measures identified by the City and the community should be included in this card on an annual basis to allow tracking of key metrics time and a better understanding of successes and challenge areas.

2. Policy

Vision Zero Policy

Vision Zero is a traffic philosophy that rejects the idea that traffic crashes are accidents, and instead asserts that serious injuries or fatalities on the transportation system are preventable and unacceptable.

The more Santa Rosa understands where and why crashes happen, the more different departments can take actions to reduce them. The City can use this understanding to develop roadway designs that prioritize bicycling, walking, and other transportation facilities that enhance comfort and can be implemented quickly to adapt and respond to identified challenges.

The high-injury network identified in this 2018 Plan Update is a strong start to developing this understanding. Asking additional questions about the causes and locations of crashes can help the City re-prioritize funding for projects that target behaviors and locations that may be contributing to crashes:

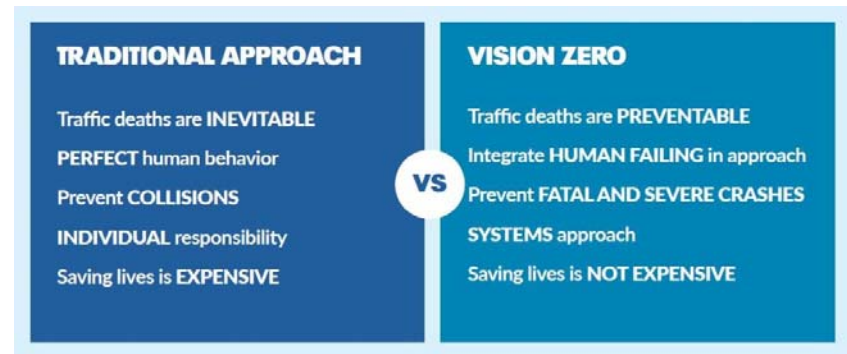
- What are the total number of crashes (all modes)? Of these crashes, how many were fatal or severe injuries?
- What were the most striking contributing factors?
- How are the crashes affected by posted speed, road class, or other identifiable feature of the road?

An inclusive process and equitable outcomes are a core component of adopting Vision Zero. Santa Rosa has emphasized their commitment to equity in this 2018 Plan update by offering inclusive outreach opportunities and identifying projects near schools, around housing for seniors and people with disabilities, and neighborhoods most reliant on public transportation. In addition, actions can be taken to address equity in enforcement.

As part of this Plan update, the City and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board are reaching out to the City of Fremont to discuss their Vision Zero program.

This Plan recommends the City consider whether adoption of a Vision Zero Policy is an appropriate step to increase the City's existing commitment for all users of its diverse transportation systems.

The Vision Zero Network has resources and case studies available to guide cities as they develop and implement Vision Zero Action Plans. More information at:
visionzeronetwork.org/project/roadmapforaction
visionzeronetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VZN-9-Components.pdf



School Zone Speed Limits

On January 1, 2008, AB 321 took effect allowing local governments to extend school zones up to 1,000 feet and reduce speed limits within 500 feet of a school site to 15 mph in residential neighborhoods or on highways with speed limits of 30 mph or less.

In Santa Rosa from 2007 to 2016, nearly 14 percent of crashes involving a bicyclist or pedestrian occurred within 500 feet of a school campus—77 crashes involving a bicyclist, and 89 crashes involving a pedestrian.

At 15 mph, more than 90 percent of pedestrians are likely to survive a crash with only minor injuries. As speeds increase, however, crash severity increases dramatically. At 20 mph most crashes result in serious injuries to pedestrians, and nearly half may be fatal. At 40 mph, 90 percent of pedestrians will be killed in a crash. Reducing speeds even slightly can have a profound effect on safety for people walking and bicycling to school.

Cities that have already enacted this law include Berkeley, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the City of Goleta.

This Plan recommends the City enact this law around eligible schools. AB 321 requires engineering and traffic surveys to be conducted to indicate that the existing speed limit is not appropriate. Santa Rosa can work with the Transportation and Public Works department to determine an implementation schedule that accommodates staff capacity. In addition, Santa Rosa can work with local law enforcement to educate parents and drivers about the new policy.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

Transportation is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Santa Rosa and the City's 2012 Climate Action Plan recommends several strategies to reduce the number of miles residents and visitors travel daily by automobile. Following the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 743, CEQA guidelines will change how transportation impacts are measured by transitioning from auto delay calculated as Level of Service (LOS) to vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This Plan recommends the City adopt VMT as its standard for evaluating vehicle miles travelled and greenhouse gas emission impacts of transportation projects.

To help make this transition, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) offers Priority Development Area grants to assist municipalities in transitioning their general plans to implement VMT-based transportation impact standards.

Street Sweeping

Residential streets in Santa Rosa are currently swept once per month, and commercial streets are swept more frequently. Despite this, community members expressed concerns about debris in bicycle lanes and on shared use paths.

This Plan recommends reviewing street sweeping practices and street sweeper driver training to ensure on-street bicycle lanes are swept at least monthly, and that they are cleared of any glass or other debris following a collision.

Vegetation Maintenance

In many places in Santa Rosa, landscaping and vegetation near sidewalks and bikeways has overgrown into the travelway and creates challenges for people walking and bicycling. Overgrown vegetation can not only create mobility challenges by narrowing the usable travelway, it can limit visibility and contribute to debris on the pathway. Routinely trimming back vegetation and mowing pathway shoulders contributes to a safer and more comfortable active transportation environment.

This Plan recommends the City implement a method for reporting vegetation in need of maintenance, and develop a policy to respond to all reports within a reasonable timeframe.

Bicycle Parking at Large Events

Chapter 11-40 of the Santa Rosa Municipal Code currently addresses the procedures and requirements to apply for an event permit within the City. This Plan recommends revising Section 11040.040 Permit - Conditions for Issuance to require events expected to draw more than 5,000 attendees must provide secure, attended bicycle parking for attendees at no charge. Key considerations include:

- A space that is enclosed and secured on three sides (“corral”) must be provided, with the fourth side consisting of tables for checking in bicycles
- The corral must be in a visible and easily accessible location within one block of the event
- Bicycle parking must be offered for the full duration of the event, including the bicycle parking attendants having access to the location at least one hour before and one hour after the event for setup and break down
- Availability and location of free bicycle parking must be noticed on all event promotion where transportation or directional information for the event is advertised, in the same format and with an equal amount of space as parking and transportation information for other modes

- Bicycle parking must be attended and monitored at all times with a number of staff sufficient for the size of the event and whether attendees are expected to arrive for a single start time or arrive throughout the event
- Bicycles will be checked in and returned with a claim check to ensure the correct bicycle is released to each person, and bicycle valet attendants will record and share the number of bicycles parked at the event in order to better estimate the space needed for the following year
- The valet bicycle parking service provider shall have insurance; should the event sponsor provide the bicycle parking service, bicycles checked in must be insured against theft

The City of Oakland operates a successful bicycle parking policy for large events, and may be a resource to Santa Rosa.